WESTWORDS

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WESTWORDS

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WESTWORDS

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This Wariness

Awareness now is sometimes wariness. Ours is a special age because in ripping off convention's mask – looking at what honestly lies beneath, we are often overwhelmed by delusions. When the world is demasked, when men and values lie bare, what then? Still we keep looking until "sadness overcomes" us. But honesty begins.

This is Eastertide and spring, "when weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush." It is a symbol of redemption, coupled with a wary age. "What is all this juice and all this joy?" shouts Hopkins.

"Thrush eggs look little low heavens," but man moves forward in doubt. Christ questioned, too. Yet all that is fresh is in this season – in our age – Eliot's discovered word-sense, Joyce's depth of meaning, pop art, op art and "glassy peartree leaves and blooms."

This is another beginning.

K.K.

Our Contributors

Barbara Benefiel is an English major and a math minor who is most often seen smiling.

Barbara Booth has become Barbara Feldman. She likes ballet and ballroom dancing.

Julie Buswell plans to attend San Diego State College to earn her Secondary Teaching Credential.

Linda Caggiano seldom turns papers in on time, but during the summer when there aren't classes to think about, she hunts grunion in the red tide.

Diane de Anda is a chess and tennis fan.

Sister Mary del Val, SND, likes Hemingway, the colour red, gardenias, and Aaron Copland.

Frances Fisher prefers foreign films.

Kathy Haverick reads Dr. Seuss at the beach.

Kathryn Kenyon feels as though she has sprinted a thousand miles to and fro across the circle in the last four years.

Thea Liston is frantically seeking a copy of Baldwin's *Another Country* when she isn't listening to Gregorian chant.

Bobbie Longo graduates in May. She will be getting married, but she also plans to teach in some Los Angeles elementary school.

Lil Milewski is a sophomore who does such non-conformist things as wearing orange on St. Patrick's Day.

Brigid Najera already has her Bachelor of Arts degree.

Colleen O'Hora is a sophomore chemistry major who boasts the home of the original "Dodger a Go-Go."

Sister Mary Tereslyn, SND, likes the abstractions of math, the organisation of science and the music in G. M. Hopkins.

Linda Williams is a junior transfer student who likes both folk music and fondue. She is working for a teaching credential and hopes to get into the CUE programme.

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Spring

Newborn and naked,
my tales are of
beginnings.

The trees awake
and when they yawn
they are the many mouths
of music.

Now green and blind,
I am weaving streamers
for your dreams.

The sun ripens
and his touch is
panacea, a rainbow
of life.

Capricious and coy,
I stir the phoenix
of hope.

BRIGID NAJERA

To St. Joseph:
An Alleluia

It is a small statue of a man.
A sharp knife carved it square
And a thin brush made it brown.
Before me now he stands,
Deep-set slits for eyes and wise.
I want to cry out "Alleluia!"

In a voice most loud, but the man
Stands hard on the square
Of wood and merely is wise.
I want to cry out "Alleluia!"
To the small carved man who stands
And looks very quietly brown.

If his eyes grew wide, and the man
Looked about, and the wise
Mouth curved in a smile not brown,
And under his feet the square
Moved, would he stand
Any more an Alleluia?

I like sea gulls with square
Wings, white not brown,
Who fly, and not stop or stand,
And soar, not be wise,
And are much unlike this man.
They shout "Alleluia!"

He shouts "Alleluia!"
There is something about this man –
Carved thing that is too wise.
The quiet inside the square
Says "shhh" and brown –
Like refuses to dance, but stands.

Be wise and stand square,
Oh, come, brown man,
Cry Alleluia with me!

BARBARA BENEFIEL

Food for the Angels

BARBARA BOOTH

Philosophy is a subject for only the wisest of men and the angels, I've been told. I'm not a philosopher myself, although I have always held that noble quest for truth in the highest regard. Moreover, I am quite convinced that I never shall be a philosopher. Those lofty realms are far above my feeble stature. This fact was vividly impressed upon me the other day. As I was sauntering across the UCLA campus, I noticed a fellow student from my history class shuffling along with his eyes fixed on the ground and his hands clasped solemnly behind his back. He seemed rather glum and out of spirits on such a balmy day, so I thought I'd insert a friendly note into his thoughts, unaware at the time that he was a philosopher.

"Hi!" I hailed him cheerily. "How are you?"

"Eh?" His head jerked up and he furrowed his eyebrows at me. "What's that you say?"

"Hi!" I repeated gaily. "You know, how are you and all that sort of thing."

"Oh, I see," He stared at me speculatively. "You are inquiring into the state of my health. Well, in that case, it remains the same. Did you not see me an hour ago in history class and ask me the same question, and did I not say that I was fine? Perhaps you are familiar with Aristotle's statement that assertion is the saying of something concerning something and that it is in every case either true or false. My assertion before was true. Of course you might question whether it was entirely true, for in accidental senses a thing can be true that is not true in the same way for the essence."

He paused, to consider more deeply this last remark, I suppose, while I stood dumbly gaping at him.

"Well," he hurled the word into my astonished silence. "Was it the nature of my health you were inquiring into when you asked 'How are you?', or were you refering to my metaphysical relationship to the universe? That, of course, is a very profound question. At this time I cannot answer with certainty that I realize my place therein and thus cannot assert that I am fine in that sense. I am in the process of discovering new truths and revelations into the nature of things, so that, whereas before I thought I was fine, I see now that I am not. I am extremely wretched. I had based my affirmation on an erroneous concept of the metaphysical state. Your question of 'How are you?' has entered the realm of ultimate realities and exploded all my erroneous thoughts. Let me answer your question precisely. In an accidental sense, that is, with regard to my health, I am fine; in essence I am not at all."

He gazed at me sadly for a moment, then shuffled away, leaving me to repent that I'd ever opened my mouth. Philosophy must be food for wiser people than I; as far as I'm concerned, the angels can have it.

Then the Winds turn Slowly

KATHRYN KENYON

Smoke was piling from his chimney. Wind that swept the river by the old man's house caught it, hunching it south to town. The smoke was gnarling into itself as the old man did, swirling down in circles, obviating itself in the ground mist. But beyond the few old willows beside his house, spring was going up in narrow streams of smoke that rose from every prefabricated chimney in town. The skies were turning grey.

It was dark in the corner of his house where the old man sat alone shuffling the pieces of a backgammon game around a cracked board. He squinted and coughed as his dice rolled eight, and he pushed his fingers back through his hair, moving his pieces seven places; tossed again; he was flushed from the warmth of the fire.

"But still I'll win," he scowled to himself, when he suddenly shoved the dice aside. He pulled a drawer in the table open, tilting his head away, and he tossed another pair on the board. Seven; seven; they were loaded. The old man slid his pieces along – his fingers pressing on them. Then he smiled and moved again.

Every few minutes he sat back in his chair and looked at the door, drumming the table, and leaned back to his game. And although someone outside was shouting he could not hear anything but the banging of dice against wood; the willow on the roof; and the fire cracking.

"Ow, Enid, you'll catch it if you're found. Going to see the dirty man. We know you are."

"Ow, you. And I'll win the challenge," she shouted back.

A group of school boys stood outside the gate of one of the houses, their wrists all crooked deep in the pockets of their black coats; one boy was waving his cap, shouting at his sister as she walked to the back of the house, listening to their calls. The boy's friend nudged him.

"Is she really going?"

"Can't you see?" he answered.

"Wow! Dad said the storeman told him that the old guy upped and left his wife years ago. Had a daughter, too."

"What's his name?"

"Thom – he eats swimming frogs."

"And he just wanders round the streets, doesn't he, when it's midnight?" another boy said.

"Well, Lucy Lawson's uncle said he's off his rocker," and then Enid could only hear when they shouted single words. She had her face up to the river. She smelled the old man's fire, and heard her brother shout "Wolf," as her boots rubbed past each other in the mud. She would beat the old man today; beat him and speak her mind, then go, and he would never swirl that putrid tea in his pot for her again as his breath heaved around the room. She would show him something. She began to swing her arms more loosely as she walked. But she had come every day for a week. No more, tomorrow. And her step relaxed. She had not been afraid to come.

"Oh, you wouldn't do it," her friend had challenged. "He only lives alone because he's a madman and he raves. Why, you can tell from his wispy hair." She sighed now and ignored her brother.

Mr. Thomas was peering from the window when she came closer. Enid heard his feet; he opened the door for her and pointed the stem of his pipe to the fire, nodding his head to the warmth. Then he sat by it himself, pipe between his lips. Mr. Thomas resumed his backgammon, throwing the dice and slamming the pieces around to home base. He suddenly squeezed out pipe smoke, sucked his lips together and spit into the hearth.

"Always beat myself. Here's the black, Enid, and I'll beat you again, too," he winked. She looked away, hung her coat on the top of his walking stick and pulled a chair to the table. The corners of his beard had yellowed. He sneezed a second time.

"Now look here. This is a new move, a wonderful play, but you have to throw seven," he rapped the board with a cracked nail, and grabbed up his dice. His palms hurled them down. A seven.

"Move this and this, but always keep them in twos, hear?" She nodded and looked at the mud smeared over his arm. He handed her some dice, keeping his own loaded ones. He spit for luck, then the shadow on the wall jerked. He threw.

"It's seven" she murmured and the old man grinned. He sat humped and knees crossed. Then he roared and his black gums showed.

"Threw a point again, see – there it is. Are you watching, Enid? It's good, it's good. Ha. Now you go." Enid spit on her dice, looking as the mud on his arm flaked off.

"You'll learn, you'll learn," he said, seeing her gaze; then Mr. Thomas threw his turn.

"Tried to teach them young ones something when I was at the match. Did I tell you?" he looked up. "But city life was terrible bedlam. They all thought they knew everything," he sighed.

"Maybe if they got to know you they'd listen," Enid played.

"No. Makes no mind, that. They just think they know everything." and he rolled his eyes, stopping to stare into his lap with his head bent. Enid shrugged her shoulders; old man. He raised his voice as the willow branches beat the roof. He put her piece out again, and she tugged her starched collar.

"No one does know you. Why do you stay here by yourself? Everyone in town thinks it's awful!" her voice suddenly rushed out. His glance shot up at her, widening. He blinked, then his laugh rose. He sat back in his chair.

"Hear the frogs singing?" But Enid's forehead tightened. Why doesn't he stop rubbing his hair? she wondered.

"Besides it's quiet, you know, to practice here. I'll be county champion at this game someday. Be top rooster in town – get me a new vest," he said. "Then after a game I'll pop into one of the shops for a pastry. You just know a good man when you see one," he winked at her again, fingering his dice.

Enid tossed and pushed one of his pieces off the board. And the old man knocked his pipe against the hearth to jilt the ash out. He threw and one dice tottered on the edge. Eight. Enid looked away and he moved seven. He's mad, she thought.

The afternoon grew close around them and wind howled. They

played on and the fire lowered to a blue light, until finally the old man stood up.

"Mr. Thom is cold," he said, and Enid watched the swollen fingers pull a sack from the corner. Poor Tom's a-cold. He scratched around the bottom and took out coal, licking his lips, and flinging it into the flames.

"You throw the way my dad does," Enid said, "out from behind." She looked down at his wrist, and the shadow on the wall moved near her. His left hand smoothed the other hand.

"Tea? How about tea? It's time for it now." She nodded at him, and his fingers went into a delft jar. He pushed the backgammon board over putting the leaves on the table. But he was humming and pulled a piece of paper from his pocket, aimed and threw it into the fire.

"I used to be a baseman when I was in school. This here's my good arm – throws the dice anyway, doesn't it!" But Enid was thinking of the challenge and interrupted him.

"Why we have a brown jar like that at home," she said and his humming stopped.

"Belonged to my wife years ago, before she left me." Astonished she gazed at him, grotesque, and wondered that he could even move. Left years ago. He seemed to hunch south, squatting before the fire alone and a cowlick was jutting out of his matted hair. He was a quiet man, Enid thought and she suddenly touched his shoulder. She stood up. The room was heavy with smoke; birds had blocked the flue with branches from their nest in early spring. Even the old man smelled of smoke. And she remembered how her father would be sitting, dressed with tie, by their cement hearth. Enid stared at the crevices in the old man's neck. He stirred.

"You're about thirteen, aren't you?" he asked. "Well, give us a bit of a kiss, like a good girl," and he pointed to his forehead. She glanced down at him; his shadow moved. And rubbing the spot he had touched, she bent over stiffly, kissing the air between them.

"See, you've made the water boil," he laughed. Enid frowned and she reached to the mantel, snatching the stained cups down. Then he counted aloud, filling the teapot above the line he used alone.

They sat quietly at the table, glancing at each other, away, around the room, and Mr. Thomas sipped his tea. He put his cup on the board and looked down at his throwing hand. Enid stared at him, but then he turned to watch the fire.

"I'm glad," he started and took another swallow, "that you act better than the others your age." Enid could not take her eyes away from him. She crossed her knees, then looked at his neck, as he began shifting back and forth in his chair, drinking.

"Those youngsters in the city asked absurd things – like how do I wash my beard, you know. But they didn't exactly say it – they shouted it on the streets. 'Old Thom,' they said, 'is a terrible troll.' Well, then I roared at them. So." He rotated his cup on his knee. He sighed and the fire cracked. He watched her, tilting his head, half-smiling, then his eyes dropped. Enid sat still, looking at the tea leaves in her cup. One had clung to the side.

"Let's play another game," she suggested, picking up her dice as well as his and starting to move the pieces to their place. But he looked at her again, and his forehead creased.

"No, my tea's gone cold," he slowly pushed his cup away. Enid

looked at him. It was silent. The fire was low; the room was dark. There was no clock, no radio, nothing but the bare wood wall and his hammock strung up in the other corner. The old man looked puzzled.

"I think it's late," Enid stood. "I really ought to go."

"Yes, that's right," he nodded and he turned his eyes around to her.

"Oh, but come again and I'll show you something else. Best learner I've got," he rose and smiled, pushing his hair back to smoothe the dry ends down. Enid saw his yellow nails and slipped into her coat. She nodded, and when she opened the door the frogs on the river were singing. She smelled the wet mud and the cold air made her turn suddenly around and smile at the old man. But she walked away quickly, swinging her arms and listening to the unending rattle of water in the river.

"Watch careful on the way back," he raised his hand to Enid's back when she left, growing greener through the trees until he could no longer see her. But she heard his door slam. It's going to rain, she said to herself.

She saw the lights on in her house. For a moment she stood on the bank as the river ran with the sound of song. Then a frog jumped near her, and she gritted her teeth stepping through the bushes into her garden. Her brother leaned out an upstairs window.

"Ow, Enid, you're in for it. Hiss!" he chanted. But she tossed her head. It had been a good game. She opened the door to the back porch. She had almost beat the old man. Her mother stopped her when she went through the hall. Her brother was leaning over the top of the stairs with one foot pushed between the banister rails. He stood watching her.

"Didn't catch it!" she snapped.

"Heard Mother say not to go again. 'You don't have much in common, dear, and it doesn't look well for everyone to see,!" he mimicked.

"Oh, scat with you," Enid said. "I beat him."

"I don't believe you did it. And if you did beat him, then the dirty guy's really done for. Gads, that's one for you, beat by a girl," he looked at her and started down the stairs.

"Why didn't you go then?" Enid whispered. "Are you so afraid of him yourself, boy," and she pulled her shoulders back. Her brother swung around.

"Did he touch you?" he shouted, but Enid had gone into her room and sat in the dark waiting for dinner. A shadow and her foot tapped the floor and finally she took her coat off, going to the window. Columns of smoke rose all along the street and along the streets behind. The town was pillaring to the sky together, and a drop of rain glistened on the window.

But the old man sat alone, gnarling into himself as his smoke did, swirling around in circles about his board. He tossed.

"Go into town tonight – look in shop windows at the vests. Old Thom'd like a red one," he muttered and put a piece out.

"I'll go quietly when the moon is high." Then he put the extra dice away and began throwing what Enid had used.

"No mind," he shrugged his shoulders. "You'll still win over, you old troll."

And Enid was whispering 'old troll' to herself as she stood by her window, playing with a worn pair of dice her brother had once given her. She tossed eight and pretended it was seven.

"They tottered on the sill," she thought alone. The storm came.

Thunder rolled across the sky. There was a rush of rain and the air turned grey as the water beat against the smoke. Each chimney seemed to twist suddenly earthward. The old man tossed – it was his own seven now – and Enid tossed once more before she climbed downstairs to eat her dinner. But when she went, she ran her hand through her hair, smoothing it; and at the table she sat up straight when she smelled the tea as her mother brought the delft pot in.

The old man tossed again, thinking aloud to himself. Then he sat back in the corner of his house. Old Thom relit his pipe. It was the end of spring and the winds were slowly turning. He thought of summer walks in town when a warmer wind might blow.

In her dining room, everyone's head bent in grace, not even Enid glanced around. But she sat quietly squeezing her dice until her palm was red. It was the hour when everyone in the prefabricated town sat down to eat. Everyone's head was bent. Old Thom reached to the table, slid the game away and his hands dangled empty beside him.

"Summer walks," he laughed and his twisted shadow swayed. He stretched his feet out; his fingers were hanging loose. He laughed again, louder until the river tossed the laughter apart. Poor Tom's a-cold. The fire had been slowly moldering – a hunching smoke that always rode the storms. Thom wavered a moment now, and the town went on quietly eating.

LIL MILEWSKI

The Mount is Music

A song

I hear at dawn

In the trees. In daylight

It plays in smiles that fling silver

At night.

Meditation during Intergral Calculus

My soul is
circumscribed by a polygon.
But occasionally
it seeps into the corners
where, undetected,
it r u c l s into a new shape
— adventuring.
Sometimes my soul bumps the unyielding edges of its polygon
hard
and temporarily turns into mashed ellipse, no longer well-balanced,
equidistant from the center at all points.

But polygon is good, keeping soul disciplined,
when it would, round and endless as it is,
sail off to i n f i n i t y.

No beginning and no end – circle-soul – most important is the center.

Maybe
someday I will knock my polygon into a rhombus or trapezoid.
and
definitely
someday my circle will degenerate to a point
single and
intense.

SISTER MARY TERESLYN, S.N.D.

In the Cold Outside

FIRST PRIZE STORY
CABRINI $200.00

KATHY HAVERICK

I

Behind them the sun had burned down to embers and it gave no warmth. Little creatures bit her ankles. She itched with sweat and dust and foxtails inside her clothes. But he had no patience, and she scrambled after him up one more embankment, scratching her fingernails into the yellow soil, barking her knees on bits of shale. Rock crumbs falling made a splattering sound behind them; she made a sound in her mouth. He turned, waited, then they hurried on. A sharp wind had started up, carrying darkness like a rain of ashes. Trees were taller; the brush – denser. Her flesh bristled against the cold. One south-flying bird screamed wildly and suddenly she felt dry like the thin leaves underfoot.

He found a place near water with some bitter fruit to chew. Flattening the weeds, they hollowed out a bed among the leaves. They pressed together against the sharp air and suddenly reminded of her after the whole day of forgetfulness, he took her.

Later in the night, she awoke because of a pebble she felt in her side. She stirred, picked it out and shivered in the hard, aching cold. For a while she watched her husband sleeping. Then hearing a fine, high humming she whimpered, then wept. Even the stars had their singing, while she could find no sound for the cold or the tiredness or the strange aloneness there was outside.

II

All the grey wet sky was falling. The dust had turned to mud and little trickle-rivers collected on the ground. She was huddled near the wall, leaning her cheek against its gravelly roughness. The sick sweetness of old hay and warm fur, the staleness of dead fires and food long since eaten pressed around her. But she only stared out. Her husband was out somewhere – getting food. He was always out.

Already she was heavy and old. And death squirmed in her stomach. Perhaps not death. There had been a cat that had been dying, bleeding – but it hadn't died. But her husband was afraid of her. Bitterness rose in her mouth and she spat it out. The earth rumbled; the sky flashed. Aching with tiredness, she stayed still and staring. There was no fear anymore, only a kind of dry, empty anger with the thunder, the man, and the waiting.

Finally it ended. It wasn't death but a living thing that tore itself from her. A kicking, squalling, hairless little man. She lay spent, breathing in the smell of her own warm blood and being surprised. Strange, that life should begin in so much pain – hers hadn't she was sure. She touched him gingerly. Then like a sudden chill breeze a sadness struck her – how sorrowful that he should be born in a cold time of the year.

III

The seasons passed into one another and again dawns came up edged with ice. She stirred up the fire, warming her hands in the first smoke from the wet wood and listening to the child wailing. Like the trees, she had gone stiff and dry; she had no more milk. He was well though. Her shoulders and hips ached from carrying him. He crawled about the floor, dragging a ewe's bone in the dust. Bending, she gave him a piece of dried meat. He ate with little growling sounds while she shook out their sleeping mats and gathered in some more sticks. The day was dark—even when the sun was highest the land was grey and cold. All things were dried and hardened. Once full of sweet berries, their fat, green bushes now had died into twigs and thorns. Her husband had to walk further each day to find fruit or meat. The trees were silent of birds and naked of greenery. Her body was tired and hollow.

IV

When the green season came again they scratched the ground open and put in seed. Gathering animals together they formed their own flocks. She saved foods against the next winter and smiled at what they made the land give them. Her son grew tall.

The seasons went faster and her boy was strong and hairy like his father. Together the men turned the soil, and planted the seeds. She tended the beasts and the fire and was glad for their home and land. Once again her womb was filled. But now there was grain for warm mush in the morning; there was milk and meat for evening. When it was summer she bore another son. He came easily and cried little. Her husband held him in the light and was proud. The baby was pink and fat. The woman was glad of him; this child would warm her old age.

The boy stood straighter and laughed more than his brother. When he was older he would lie up on the green hill, watching his father's flocks and singing. Below by the fire, his mother would hear him and move more lightly at her work. But his brother listening to him would dig at his plot of ground more fiercely, then stride home and kick the dog out of the doorway. A bitterness ate at him like the worms that ruined his young plants. Their father smiled at the boy; their mother liked to touch his hair.

The eldest would sit at night watching the fire and his own long shadow on the wall. The acrid smoke stung his eyes, and seeing his mother at work on a coat for his brother soured his thoughts. Their father praised the youngster's care of the animals. Across the field in the evening he could hear his mother laughing with the boy.

Fear for his father's favor grew in the first-born and a tight fury thickened in him against his rival. Their land was rich with fruit because of his work and his sweat all these years while his brother had been playing in the dust and chasing animals. Why should the weaker rule the stronger?

In the fear of winter their father called them before him. Their mother sat behind him in the shadows listening. By firelight, the farmer looked bigger; his hard limbs and dark face showed his strength and age. The boy was slight beside him. Their father gave instructions for the planting and harvesting. He charged his first son with the care of the land and the family. Yet it was the boy who was appointed priest and granted

the greater authority. To him their father gave the fire and the right to sacrifice. Taut with rage and envy, the first-born tore at his hands until the old man was finished. Then he flung himself outside.

V

In the evening, the eldest walked with his brother out over the fields. They stood for a while to see the colors changing in the sky. The warm smells of turned soil and tall grain tickled the older. The desire for the land was hard in his throat. Watching the shepherd, he bent and put his fingers around a grey, heavy stone. The air was still. Already their father's home behind them was in darkness. The sky ahead was wide with the last light. The boy began to sing. A fire of ashes burned in his brother's eyes. Carefully he stood up with the stone in his hand. Staring, he drew his arm back slowly, then stood – afraid. Hate shivered through him, and in one sudden movement, he flung out his arm. There was a hard thwack, and the song stopped so abruptly that the silence exploded in his head, and in his ears, and in his eyes. He dropped the stone.

His brother had crumpled and now lay still on the ground. He stood watching the boy's stillness. Slowly he bent and called him. He put two fingers on the place where some blood had trickled down, and stared at its warm redness on his hand. The quiet echoed and reechoed. Nothing moved. He knelt in the soft dirt, breathing slowly through his mouth, and reaching out with a kind of awe, he lightly touched his brother's eyes, his soft mouth, his hands, and his head where the stone had broken it.

Over behind him there was a crackling in the brush. He scrambled up. The air suddenly pressed against him thick and unbreatheable. Drowning in it, his mind screeched with ways to hide what he'd done. He tore at the ground, trembling at the crickets' call behind him, straining to hear voices or footsteps. He hated to touch his quiet brother now, but the night had grown loud with the sounds of darkness. He rolled him over into the hollow and patted the dirt over him. He sweat at his work and the wind caught him. Shivering he pulled his clothes around himself more tightly. For a moment he stood watching their fire over across the field. Then fear, like the wind, swept over him again and he turned toward the trees running.

VI

She bent slowly, heavy with age, stirring the fire as she had always done, cupping her hands over it to try to draw in its warmth and dispel the constant coldness that sat in her bones. Outside a new wind played on the leaves like rain. Another winter was coming. She felt it in her shoulders, but only shrugged them at the breeze and the promise of frost. She was too old to fear the change of seasons.

She bent again, to rouse her sleeping son. Already the day was light. But she paused before shaking him, and smiled at his quiet face and long legs. There was a special softness in her for this child. He had come, a gift in her age when his brothers were gone. And her joy in him was greater than pain – the pain of loss and bitterness, of birth, and of winters coming.

After giving him a bit of meat and some warm meal, she hurried him out to the pasture, and busied herself with her chores. The morning grew cooler. After a while, she took up their mats and carried them outside to

shake. She lifted her eyes up to the east where their flocks were grazing. There on the hill she saw her son and a stranger standing together talking. She watched them with curiosity. The man moved in a way she remembered. He was her first-born – the murderer – returned to take his birthright. Fear, so keen it burned, flooded through her. Her heart beat unevenly like a bird desperate for escape fluttering against her ribs and then in her throat. It choked her shout. She stood in stiff frenzy, silently screaming. Watching them, she waited – her face twisted in wild, quiet weeping.

Her boy – their youngest. When he was born she had at last buried the dead and the scalding hatred. Now must she watch him be struck down by the child of her bitterness? Must it all happen again and leave her to die barren?

The boy turned and seeing his mother, waved widely. He touched the man, then galloped down the hill and sprinted across the field to her. She hugged him to herself most savagely and tenderly, and laughed loudly. And the wind carried that rich sound up to the man on the hill.

He was old. All lean and grey, like a jagged desert rock. He walked as though his bones were chafing his skin inside. There was a hopeless quiet about him as he looked over his father's rich land. The grain grew tall here, the flocks had multiplied to fill the grass lands. There had been locust in the east, then drought – and famine. The soil was fruitless in the south. And in the city there was no work for his hands; the people pressed about him and he had been cheated in the market place. He had wandered, a farmer without land.

The young boy was his brother. It was good that his parents should have a son. The long-stale fear blew about him, but he was too tired to be afraid. He was as barren as the land he had tilled. Deliberately, he climbed down the hill and walked across the field.

For a long time his mother shielded her eyes with her hand and watched him coming. Old bitterness strangled her and she swallowed again and again hoping to release it into tears. Her youngest son stood behind her fidgeting in confused sadness, while she stared out at the growing figure. His gauntness surprised her as did the glint of gladness she felt in seeing him. His clothes flapped in the rising wind and she remembered suddenly what a hungry, ill-dressed child he had been. Then like vomit the old anguish rose in her – the hate. But it changed in her mouth. He fell down on the ground before her, but she only bent and touched him and led him inside where it was warm.

Latticed Egg

LINDA CAGGIANO

The first crack in the white round-shelled egg
Shows the coming of the new spring –
A web of blood and tissue latticed
Into soft down and sharp persimmon
Beak – the gentle burn of life's candle
That awakens newly into a haze – inebriated.

But then from outside movement springs
Wind that tugs the flicker of candle,
Separating the warm light into first persimmon
Then yellow, increasing joy to an inebriated
Power of taste and feel over the latticed
Earth outside the narrow oval of the egg.

More bone and strength wax round the candle
And bind it to its wick with pure persimmon
Strands of flesh that throb, throb – inebriated
With feel of air and food not of the egg
But of another world that grows from spring to spring
And adds each day thin sticks to the lattice.

While day becomes the pick and choose of persimmon
Kernels from among the black seeds that serve as egg
To the fertile-moist brown dust, growing candles
Of waving, golden-armed corn that lattices
The year into months of planting – growth – and the inebriated
Harvest, brimmed with life, passes into winter and then spring.

Soon though, the ever-warming inebriated
Fires slow, as bones brittle-thin lattice
Into splintered pieces like an old egg.
While deep within the fibres of life, spring
Goes from the strength of sinewy muscle and persimmon
Fades from deep to pale in the crown of the candle.

And in a bridging second the slight latticed
Strands that held back last inebriated
Gasps at life, pull taut and spring
Apart the slender wick from blackened candle –
As the last sweet juice is dried from edges of the egg
Leaving a hollow shell without warm-liquid persimmon.

Perhaps the too-young spring that died latticed
Into non-inebriated chunks and bits of dry persimmon
Cocoons secretly another dim candle burning in another egg.

Resurrection

And pressing down the asphalt clouds grow black,

Those crimson spasms of the dying sun

Entombed beneath the sky; and there are none

To roll away the stone or keep it back,

And pressing round, corroded hills embrace

The clotting wounds, like hypocrites assault

The seething yellow skin with clubs of asphalt

And iron. See a cracked and bruised face!

A little while, and then again a little . . .

While we, whose stymied dreams anticipate

The freedom of the morning, contemplate

A little while, and then again a little . . .

While we await the dawning and the birth

Of that Son's golden grandeur on the Green Earth.

JULIE BUSWELL

On Spring's Being

As winter passes on to new
Things, I wonder, "What is Spring?"
It seems I ask the question every year
And every year a different answer comes.
This time, though, I've found it in a word –
Spring is freshness.

The season opens with a freshness
As God has just created a new
World. Almost without a word,
He beckons flowers to spring
Forth in full. And with them comes
The richly green quarter of every year.

Never this beginning bursts the same. One year,
Following a dank dreary winter, the freshness
Seems far too late. Finally it comes
Bringing with it glorious new
Sun to shrink swelled rivers to spurting springs.
At last – the unspoken word!

While yet another time the word
Winter is hardly spoken for the year
Before is heard the sound of spring.
The wind, suddenly tame, whispers freshness
To all animals, old and new,
Announcing newness as it comes.

But always when it comes
Spring carries with it a word
Of inspiration. God sends this new
Hope to man to persevere another year.
And seeing man's joy in this freshness,
God continues sending spring.

The new life nature buds in spring
Mirrors the Resurrection. Christ comes
At this time bringing a freshness
Of grace to His newly redemmed human race. "The Word
Was made flesh" to save us and year after year
Spring shouts its joy as we start anew!

As then, freshness is spring,
Into his world entire comes a Word,
Year after year, which makes man new.

COLLEEN O'HORA

Summer Sonnet

Summer slithers in these mornings. Mists lift
over blue and sunning roofs. The sand laughs. Lingering
about eggshell day, the tresses at my waist drift
to the paper sack with four buttered toasts. Summers sing
me out to the sea to sift among pebbles. A spell
hangs about me.

Oh, the sea slaps sudden here:
I lift one shell and the once silenced hell
inside claws my gut. My lingering lumbers near
vinegar this shell wrenches to my tongue.
Summer weighs down my lap. Sweat oozes like flies
down my neck. The toast has cracked. Summers once sung
me golden. I dirge the boardwalk. It is peace that dies.
The snagging speck in the eye left by forgotten shells
caught when the sea slapped the peace of a gilded spell.

THEA LISTON

KATHRYN KENYON

Cry Fish

A chartreuse sky shafts August waves; whole heaven
Wholly piercing to their shallows, yet they –
The undulating pulses of the sea lungs breathing space.
A bloated sun-fish hovers in the rift,
And sadness overcomes me.
But in the noon of harvest warmth
Light burnishes the pulse; and man
Is blotted by a jib's wave-shadow.
  The all of us – four boats – doze up and down,
Nets set; and gulls rave, scaring
Shoals of barracuda close.
Then sadness overcomes me.
The shoulders of the waves nod.
And I, bow-bound, drop strings
Of broken sea pods off the deck:
A mermaid's necklace. The sun green
Lady tossed it backwards when she swam
Away with water-baby Tom.
  But sadness overcomes me now
As I plunge down in Ocean's hands.
The sky is lost beneath yellow mines
Of sun-fish, nets, and sitting moon-fish
Breathing one large pulse of ocean sphere.
Days pierce the shallows. And suddenly fins flip.
A pause. And desperate splashing. Lidless eyes,
Bright scales, entwined line, and the knots
That capture living. Day's circle is spun
Around heaven's fish and around the voice of
Burnished sun – the waves. This day:
Calm sea, full catch, and August sun.
But sadness overcomes me.

Joys Lost

On bellows the mellow
bassoon
In the zoo-park, while the
baboons
And raccoons dance delightedly – like a
cartoon –
Before this child, who lost joy
too soon;
Weeping, she clings to her burst
blue balloon.

BOBBIE LONGO

A Portrait of Galadriel

LINDA WILLIAMS

"I feel as if I was inside a song." So speaks one of the characters of J.R.R. Tolkien's masterful trilogy, *Lord of the Rings* (Ace Books, 1965). And so we feel also, as we move through the enchantment and excitement of Middle-Earth. There is a song of ancient times in an ancient land with many kingdoms. One kingdom must rule; one power prevail. A great adventure lies in the struggle for rule as the forces of evil work against those of the good and the power of the Rings is realized.

Tolkien has used his characters symbolically to depict these good and evil forces. The Elven Queen, Galadriel, in which goodness is personified, is just such an instrument. Throughout the three volumes, she is seen as a counter-action against the forces of evil because of her goodness. There are three aspects of her character which illustrate the author's symbolic portrayal: first, her physical beauty; second, her spiritual beauty; and third, her prophetic relationships with the members of the Fellowship of the Ring (those characters directly influencing the One Ring of power).

Beginning in the first volume, Tolkien makes us aware of the physical beauty of Galadriel, as he describes the land wherein she dwells, through the eyes of Legolas, an elf. Legolas, who is a member of the Fellowship, says that the Woods of Lothlorien are the "fairest of all the dwellings of his people" (I,369). And of the trees, he says that there are no others like the ones which grow in this land. In this way we become aware of the unusual beauty contained here. As the cycle of seasons is told, we learn that "in autumn the leaves fall not, but turn to gold" (I,369). The trees are a very explicit introduction to Galadriel, as they are like her and she, like them. Legolas describes the spring of Lothlorien in this way:

> Spring comes and the boughs are laden with yellow flowers; and the floor of the wood is golden, and golden in the roof, and its pillars are of silver for the bark of the trees is smooth and grey (I,369).

An excellent image of strength and beauty is expressed by this description of the woods. The use of the metalic colors of gold and silver along with the dignity and permanence of the trees, gives us a lasting impression to apply to Galadriel and her physical presence.

When the travellers are brought before the Lady Galadriel and Lord Celeborn who rules with her, the beauty we have seen in the Elven Woods is found to an even higher degree in them. They are described as being "very tall with the Lady no less tall than the Lord; and they were grave and beautiful" (I,391). Are we not reminded of the same kind of beauty found in the trees? It is even more obvious in these words of the author:

> Clad wholly in white; the hair of the Lady was of deep gold, and the hair of Lord Celeborn was of silver, long and bright . . . no sign of age was upon them (I,391).

By these descriptions the physical stature of being tall and slender depicts beauty by means of grace and dignity. The use of golden hair and white robes makes Galadriel seem to be a source of light and a reflection of it at the same time.

So we see that the Lady Galadriel is physically beautiful in a way which reflects not only loveliness but strength and dignity. It is in this way that she will combat the forces of Evil.

The word, dignity, will bring us directly to the second aspect of Galadriel's character, as it denotes both physical and spiritual beauty. Again, Tolkien paints her in much the same way, as her kind of spirituality is first expressed by means of the setting, the Woods of Lothlorien. Frodo, a hobbit and bearer of the One Ring, says that he feels as if he "had stepped over a bridge of time into a corner of the Elder Days, and was walking in a world that was no more" (I,385). Thus we begin to feel the spirit of this land, ancient and yet familiar.

A second glimpse of spiritual beauty is expressed as Tolkien describes the eyes of Galadriel. She seems of the Elder Days herself as no sign of age was upon her:

> unless it were in the depths of her eyes . . . these were keen as lances in the starlight . . . the wells of deep memory (I,391).

In this way, we see within a frame of physical beauty, a spirit also very beautiful filled with kindness and knowledge.

The conversation that follows the presentation of the members of the Fellowship of the Ring before Lady Galadriel and Lord Celeborn is important, too, as we see Galadriel as a wise and powerful ruler. The members of the Fellowship are on a dangerous journey. They seek to destroy the One Ring of power rather than let the Dark Lord possess it. Galadriel says to them:

> I will not give you counsel, saying do this or do that. For not in doing or contriving, nor in choosing between this course and another can I avail; but only in knowing what was and is and in part also what shall be (I,394).

Here, Tolkien is a little less obvious. He wished not only to project a beneficent ruler, but also a woman of justice and sensitivity.

The Lady Galadriel, introduced in the last chapters of the first volume is a sustaining symbol of the forces of good. In her physical and spiritual beauty, she bears the antiquity and prophetic wisdom of the Elves.

The members of the Fellowship remain for sometime in the Land of the Golden Wood, Lothlorien. It is here that the individual relationships with Galadriel begin and are continued throughout the other two volumes. A more elaborate scene of prophecy, than the one just mentioned, personally involves Frodo, the Ring-Bearer, and Sam, his squire. Galadriel has many powers as ruler of the Elves. One of which is a mirror that reveals the future to those who gaze upon it. After Frodo and Sam do this, they are amazed by her power and Frodo offers her the Ring. Galadriel is at first amused; then apparently tempted by its power. She says that she will be "both Beautiful and terrible" and "all shall love me and despair" (I,403). But suddenly, she is amused again and says in a gentle voice, "I pass the test. I will diminish and go into the West and remain Galadriel" (I,403). In this way, Galadriel has resisted the temptation of the Ring of power and the Dark Lord has too been overcome for a time. Galadriel percieves the forces of evil at work in the Ring and is trying to show

this to the two travellers.

An even more powerful relationship is depicted in the giving of presents by Galadriel to the members of the Fellowship. Each receives something individual yet alike in one respect. At some time during their journey, the gift will be of great aid to them, or will be instrumental in saving their lives. The best example of these gifts is the crystal phial given to Frodo. It contains the light of a star caught in water from Galadriel's fountain. She tells Frodo of its power in this way.

> It will shine still brighter when night is about you. May it be a light to you in dark places, when all other lights go out (I,415).

The phial, or Star-Glass, is used three times in both the second and third volumes. Each time the bearer calls her name and the light which comes forth gives strength and renewed confidence against the enemy.

Frodo's scene when facing death at the hands of the monster, Shelob, is an excellent example of this. Frodo draws out the phial and holds it aloft. When he gazes upon it, a change comes over him as the light and he grows brighter and brighter. With Tolkien it sounds like this:

> The darkness receeded from the phial, until it seemed to shine in the centre of a glove of airy crystal, and the hand that held it sparkled with white fire (II,356).

Here we see the goodness of Galadriel is reflected in the light of the phial, and Frodo is saved from the evil powers of darkness.

Another good example comes when Sam uses it to gain entrance to the Dark Tower which is guarded by two shadow-like creatures. When he holds up the phial at the gateway, "its white light quickens swiftly and the shadows under the dark arch flee " (III,191). And so the phial does prove to be a "light in dark places" as are the other gifts of Galadriel. The gifts are a tangible bond between her and the travellers when they are in the throes of Evil and the Dark Power. In fear the travellers cry out to her, and it is her light and/or goodness which sustains them.

By her prophetic relationship in using the mirror, the temptation of the Ring, and also the immediate relationship of the gifts to the other characters, Tolkien has again portrayed Galadriel as a symbol of good and counter-action against the forces of Evil.

It is thus that we see Lady Galadriel of the Golden Wood as an important directive in the course of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Beginning in the first volume, he makes us aware of the physical and spiritual beauty found in the Land of Lothlorien, especially the majestic trees. These same qualities and more are discovered to an even greater extent in the Lady of Lothlorien, Galadriel. "She is the present and yet remote, a living vision" to the members of the Fellowship (I,411). Her later presentations in Volumes II and III make us aware of the fact that she is truely a unifying bond between the three volumes and stands as an enlightening symbol of good against evil work of the Dark Power. The adventures and misadventures continue. Yet, there is the occasional reminder of Galadriel, the lovely Queen, who is, as Sam the Hobbit says, "hard as di'monds and soft as moonlight" (II,310).

Encounter

Once,

I was yesterday

And no one knew.

You,

They said.

A whim of a thing

Wasting the spring.

Me,

I said.

What's in a care

Nothing but air.

Since,

I am today

And still no one knows.

But,

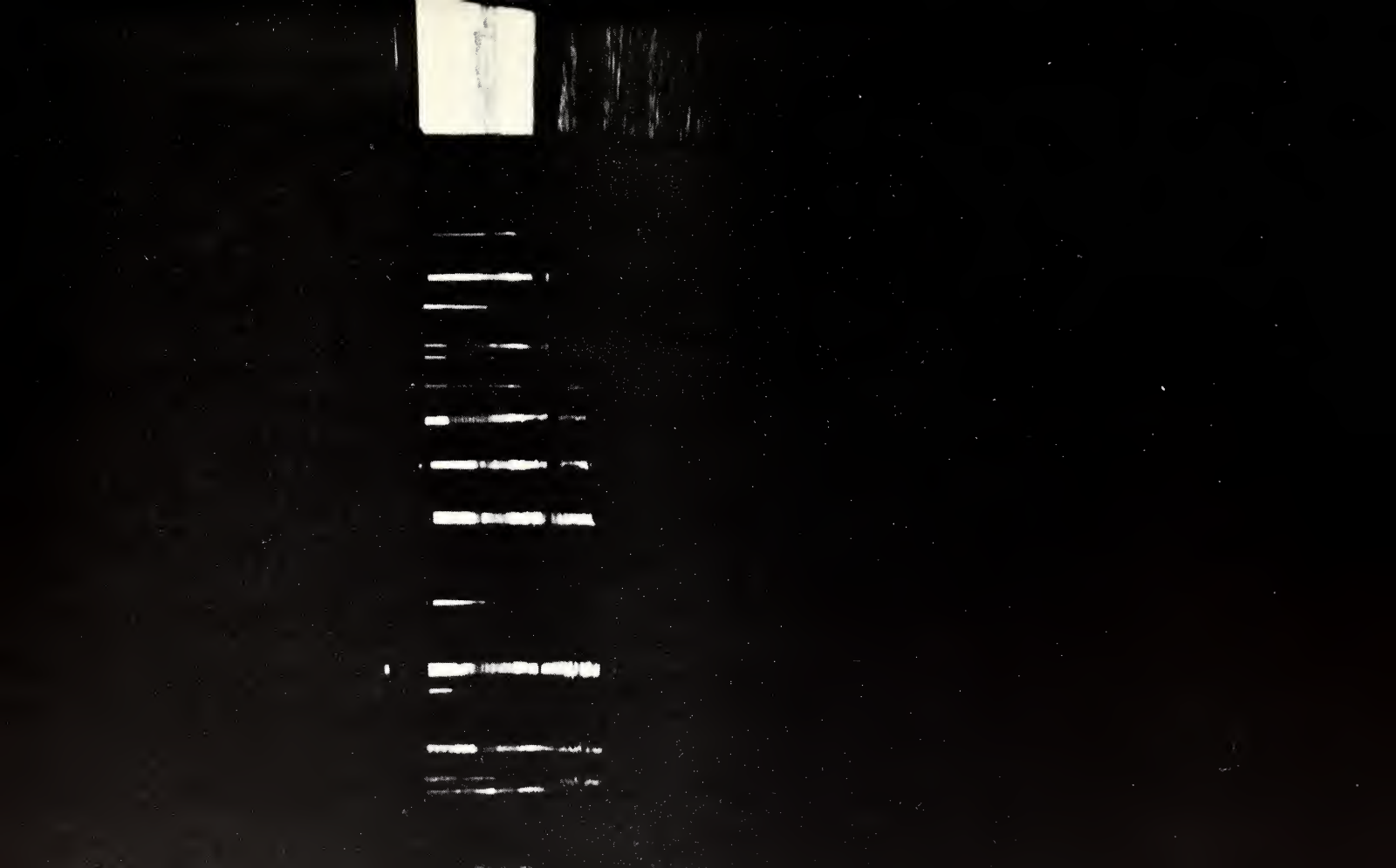
I do.

God's breath is the air

And

I am all new.

LINDA WILLIAMS



Manhattan Wharf in Autumn

In autumn my feet go down, down to the wharf
where the heavy grey waves roll, rolling to erase the frown
from a world's face of opal and silver sand, sanding the barnacled pole
of the wharf's skyward thrust, thrust from the land
up into the sky of autumn grey; greying sky and sea and dust
of earth are one in the twilight clasp, clasping the hulks of day-
boats bobbing in the waves' play, play never failing to grasp
and pull down the gull's wing, winging now seaward, now far away.
I stand on the dock, docking daylight with a slender string
of a half-finished dream, dream of moonlight broken on rock.
In the leafless wind I sway, swaying over waters that seem
to cry in no human key, keying to the tides' never-stay.
I sway in the grasp of the wind's tireless play
with the sea, and from autumn and moonlight I move away.

FRANCES FISHER

The Sun Hawks

LINDA CAGGIANO

The boy's eyes lifted, dark reflections of the birds – always the birds flying. Before they flew against the road of his people, over the wagons, over the slow-moving oxen, away into the sun back to the land of rivers and silt soil – away from the bitter desert.

But now they, with his people, flocked across the dust and the hot sand – their wheeling bodies drifting, turning, diving in the glare of sun – the sun that beat its savage beat into the boy's eyes, hands, into the very pulse of his blood, bringing the heat behind his eyes, lowering them again to his father's wagon trapped in the sand.

His shoulders heaved against the wood feeling the uneven grains set their ridges into his skin, press his body into the hard mold of strain. The wagon lurched. Oxen, pulling to the swing of a birch rod, strained into a hump of head and bulging neck. The boy pressed the grains further into his skin and stared at his father's head tight against the wagon and the seamed neck with the salt sweat running wet through the dust.

Once more the wagon jerked and the two pushed – feet slipping in sand, feeling the wood body move harded against their skin and then it was out. The oxen pulled away slowly. The boy wiped the sand from his eyes then began walking behind the wagon with his father. The two pushing heavy feet through the land.

When they reached the others, the wagons were ready for the night. It was twilight and the cooking fires glowed against the fading day. The boy roped the oxen toward a circle of wagons. "Shalom," a woman kneeling by the fire glanced up.

"Shalom," came the answer.

They set up their camp and kindled the fire. The boy leaned against the wagon-back searching the land from which they had come. A flock of birds sailed toward him from the thin line of sky and earth. He watched them come – watched them lift and sink into a flying v, wings pulled tip to tip hugging the cool stiff wind.

His eyes raised as they came over. He could see the flight leader first at the back then at the head. He could hear the cries cutting out a mournful tie between the birds and the land ahead. He watched them veer into the dusk and become dots of shadow and then nothing.

When his family was full with food and the fire was a solid mass of coals – red, searing, a neighbor came to the boy's father. "Shalom," he hurried out.

"Shalom." The father crouched by the wagon wheel.

"The leader has sent out scouts ahead, to the land near the hills."

The boy's lips smiled in a downward curl. "Again," he thought, "and what will it come to this time – like always, nothing. We will steal by in the black, our tails between our legs. This is how it has always been. We have nothing to do with others, neither in friendship nor war. What have we to give in either. We have nothing – no land, few flocks, not even strength."

"What does this mean, the scouts?" his father asked the man. "Is this to be our land, so close to Egypt?"

"No," the man replied. "Our land is far beyond. But the leader says Yahweh commands that we meet these people in war, that we set His seal against them and turn all that is theirs to the earth."

The boy's father nodded. "It is good."

After the man had left, the mother and sisters carried the bedding from the wagon – thick sheep fleece wrapping out the night-cold desert. The boy sat up on his bedroll while the others dozed, crossed hands over knees, eyes that stared themselves deep into what remained of the fire light. He saw his father straighten the bundle at his head then lie back down.

"Father," he said, "if we meet the enemy tomorrow, will we run or fight?"

The outstretched figure stirred, then turned. His father's face raised up across the coals. "You heard the words as well as I. It is Yahweh's will, Yahweh's wish that we fight and that we win. Who can deny the Lord's promise?"

"But the Lord promised land," came the strained voice, "all we have is blowing sand. The Lord promised milk and honey. We take in bitter waters and dried quail instead. The Lord promised us strength but we do not fight."

"What do you know of such things?" his father snorted. "Need Yahweh answer to you."

"I know what I see."

"What you see! And what do you see, you with your boy's eyes?" His father raised his head higher and sharpened his eyes into the boy.

"I see us day after day fighting sand and heat and sun. Never daring to meet others – never daring to go inside their cool cities. All for a god who promises."

"Tomorrow, tomorrow you will see God's promise. Then you will watch our men fight, fight and win."

"If we fight I will do more than watch."

"Hah, so you think you are old enough, eh."

"I am old enough," the boy spoke softly, "if we fight." His father grunted, lay down and curled into a wall of sheepskin against his son's eyes. Eyes filling with bitter-hot salt water. But the boy would not let them boil over, so they stayed for a long while large and wild. At last he dropped over onto the bedding and pressed his palms into the pin-prick of sand.

"Dan?" came his mother's voice through darkness, "Dan, sleep now, huh?" He nodded but did not speak. To do so would crack the throat and loose the salt tears. He opened his eyes wide to the blackness until they were filled with a blackness of their own – and then came colors of fresh honeyed waters in pools of clear colorless blue.

Over him on the still wind flew green and pale yellow birds playing in the sunrise light. And then there was a city filled with springs, with flowers like the sun without its heat, and over all the smooth dark-grained gold statue – the god who wore the secret mask of the hawk-bird.

The boy woke to bright air that spun itself into the huge orange ball moving slowly past the world rim. The ball stopped still and for a second the earth's lunge held itself between the day and emptiness. Then the ball moved on and became a sun – a sun of heat and fire and war.

The camp rose together with the sun, the women moving quietly,

quickly to feed their men. They and the children would wait until the battle was over. The boy saw what he had never seen before – a camp of war. Men sharpened blades of wood into cruel points shadow-slicing the sun. Men thin-lipped tied on soft cow-hide for protection and touched the cheeks of women with hard hands used for the plow or the hammer and now the sword.

The boy felt his mother's hand soft on his head, small like her words. "Go with God, my son." So many dry leaves blown before the battle winds. He stood with his father and there were no words only the eyes that knew. Together they looked upon the leader – his face of age, steel tangled beard, his voice parched with so many dry days since the pharaoh's daughter pulled him from the sweet water. It cracked old now as he spoke.

"My men," he said, "my warriors, you go to fight the enemy. Fight well, for you go as you have come into the desert – the Lord's chosen." They listened to his mourning cries and watched him as he went to find his place of command. With two others he went, to the mountain that stood solid in the valley. They climbed by foot and knee and crooked finger through the rock that led them to the sun.

And when his army saw the leader's arms outstretched above the valley, they marched. And their enemy marched toward them from the other side. And the boy feared – the breath caught in his throat and the words came fast and pounding with the sun beat. "My people are warriors. Will they fight well? Will they win? Will they find strength in me?"

His stomach knotted and a huge bubble formed inside, shivering itself through his weak legs. But he kept on – the pressured bodies of the men touching his and lifting it, sinking it into the marching v-shaped line – the bubble growing larger as each step followed another and the v of men moved forward and the sun rose higher.

They met the enemy and the noise of the armies' force against force stirred the blood of the boy. So he fought as best he could. Then a spear cut into his thigh and the boy fell behind the army's line. When he had fallen he took cloth and bound the wound and licked the salt blood from his hand. And the pain throbbed with the sun in his body, behind his eyes. The boy lowered his cheek to the sand and felt the pin point ridges cut into his mouth, his shoulder, his leg – and the sand salt taste move in his mouth.

And the boy turned his eyes and saw the leader, his arms out, holding the red-gold plumage of his cloak to the sun and beyond. And he saw the leader's face – up as he pulled his arms tighter finger to finger toward the sun above the stiff mountain wind.

The noise grew louder and the sun-beat pounded stronger and the salt lay in his throat and because he could not fight the boy cried out to the burning sky, "Lord, your people fly like hawks above the desert." And the outstretched arms of the leader called the people on past the battle's wind and cry to the land of sweet waters and green birds.

Cook's Tour Points

Twelve month spring with lukewarm weather,
Floral blooms from rose to heather;
Avenues lined with trim palm trees,
Stretches of sand (complete with fleas);
Hollywood, Beverly: home of a star,
Brighter ones viewed from atop Palomar;
One center city attached to a Valley,
Even including "Ravine of O'Malley."

But what always happens when company comes?
It rains.

SISTER MARY DEL VAL, S.N.D.

Horse Sense

BOBBIE LONGO

Do you ever wonder why people stretch out in a horizontal position to go to sleep, or how they could ever be comfortable like that? We horses often do. We wonder about a lot of things like that, and discuss them among ourselves – but we've never brought them up when humans are around, because there's a chance they might overhear us. Now don't get me wrong – I don't mean to say they'd be eavesdropping or anything like that. I'd better explain before you misunderstand me and think I'm insulting your race of human beings. What I mean is – that we horses can *talk,* just like you – but sh-h-h-h; I'm telling you this in strictest confidence, Willy, and you must tell no one, not even your brother Joey. You see, we've never *told* anyone, and we've never let man discover that we can talk. We have a bond among all of us, that no one will ever reveal it.

But Willy asks his favorite horse, Diamond Head, why.

"Willy," he explains, "if a human caught one of us talking, then our privacy would be invaded forever, and then we'd be caged up and pointed at and called freaks. We don't want that. You must promise not to betray us, Willy."

Willy promised. And so they talked together all afternoon, that boy and his horse.

Willy told Diamond Head he couldn't understand how any horse could sleep standing up on all fours. Diamond Head couldn't understand how people could sleep lying down, either. But he tried it – he knelt down and then flopped over on his back – how excruciatingly awkward and uncomfortable that was! Then he tried resting on his side so his hooves wouldn't be sticking straight up in the air – that wasn't very pleasant, either, and it was still clumsy!

When Diamond Head was up and steady on all fours again, he asked Willy why horse radish was called horse radish.

"We don't eat any kind of radishes, let alone the kind they make it with, and they're not as big as horses, so what's the big idea?"

Willy didn't know the why of it, and he didn't even like horse radish, either. But he assured his garrulous horse friend he'd ask his teacher about that in school tomorrow – after all, third grade teachers knew *everything!* Oh, I sure wish I could tell her about you, Diamond Head, he was thinking, but I promised I wouldn't say anything to anyone. She's a great horsewoman, and she's crazy about horses, too! She'd be so surprised!

Yes, Diamond Head was friends with her steed, who told him that she had just got him a new horse trailer. He informed Willy that it was about time people started pulling horses around after horses had been tugging people around for centuries! But he didn't like the term 'horsewoman' or even 'horseman' – the words made him think of some kind of beastie that was half horse, half man (or woman). That's what's wrong with people-language, he exclaimed; horse talk was *much* better! Why, words like 'horselaugh' were an insult to their race, and derogatory. In the people dictionary, it means a loud, boisterous laugh, and horses were neither loud, nor boisterous, nor deserving of insult! Willy chuckled and had to agree. And what about 'horsefly' – horses don't fly, and flies

don't horse, and we horses don't suck blood like horseflies do – but Diamond Head did have to admit that they were bothersome buglets to all horses.

Willy was bewildered, but amused, so he contributed to the conversation with the words 'horse jockey' and 'horseweed' – he had never seen a pony that was a jockey, and giggled at the mental picture of a horse being a jockey, wearing jester-bright checks and a cap on his pointed ears. And he thought it a shame that beautiful flowers were named after human beings and only the weeds were named after horses. Diamond Head wholeheartedly agreed about that. But Willy knew his horse was depressed about all these things, so he mentioned 'horsepower'. Just then Willy's father entered the stables to fetch some hay, startling them both.

"I thought I heard voices in here. Who ya talkin' to, Son?"

Willy gulped. "M-m-my horse."

His father, with a bale of hay on his shoulders, chuckled and walked on out, thinking to himself how he always used to babble on and on to his horse when he was a kid, and pretend that it understood and answered everything all the time. Yes, his son was a typical boy-with-pony, and he was glad he got him that horse last year. It was a healthy thing for young boys.

Whew! That was close! Willy's father had caught him off guard, and he was relieved that his precious secret had not been discovered! He continued where he had left off about horsepower, and told his unique Diamond Head that it was a compliment to the entire race of horses. The horse agreed that it was pretty great for humans to honor them like that, and measure their power by the amazing strength of horses! They discussed so many other things, too, and Diamond Head delved deeper into the insights of nine year old humans, and Willy learned more about how horses *really* think and feel. He was so happy and excited that his horse had confided in him alone, and he felt special and important to know such an astonishing secret. After all, no other horse had told any of this to any other human in the whole world – ever!

Willy woke up when the rooster crowed. Such a dream he'd had! But he was sad and disillusioned to realize that it hadn't really happened; it would've been swell. He ran out to the stables as soon as he put his overalls on, and handed Diamond Head two sugar cubes, patting his velvety nose with the white diamond shape on it.

"Thank you, Willy," said Diamond Head; "Did you sleep well last night?"

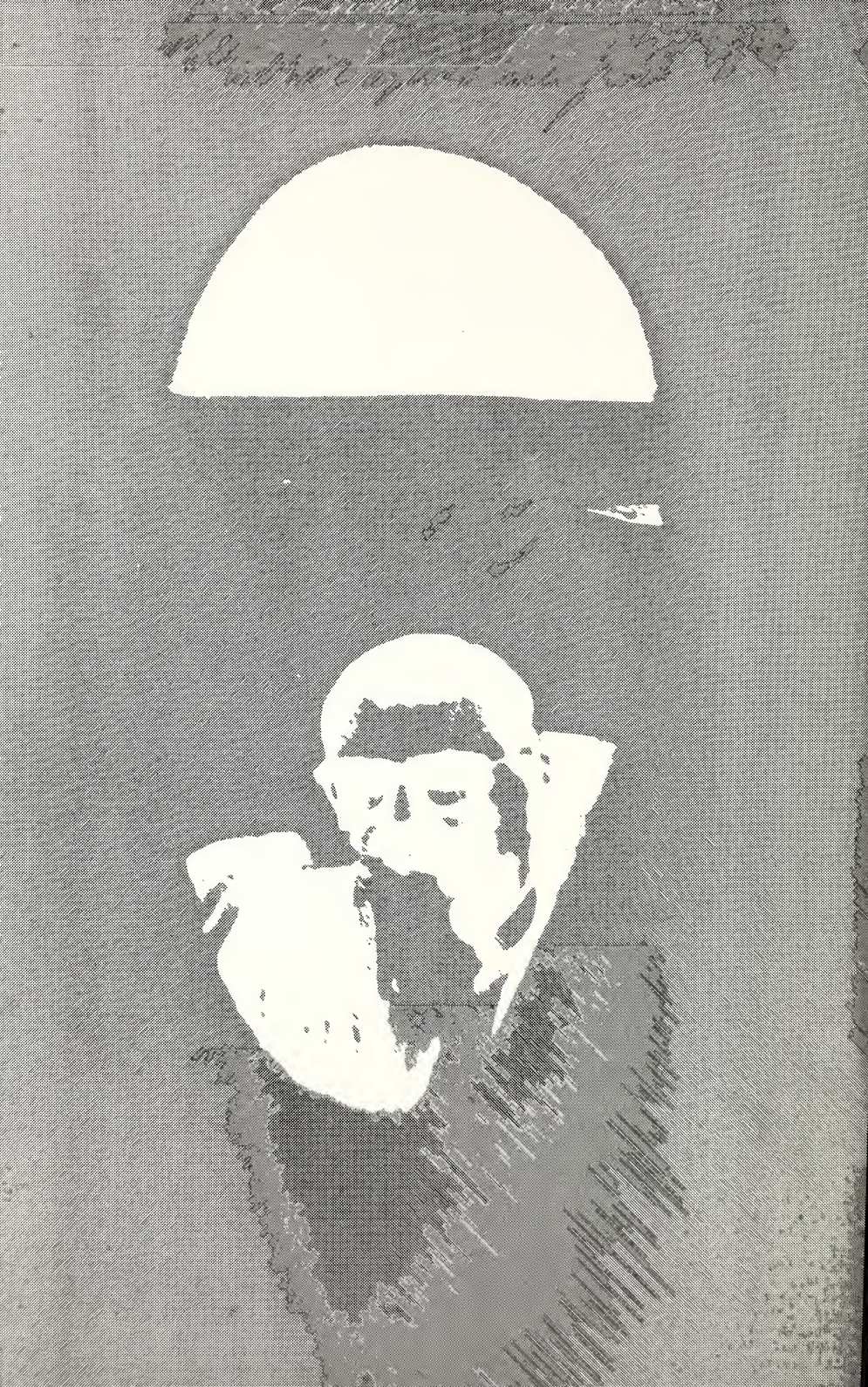
It *had* really happened after all!! He went screaming out of the stables, he was so happy to know it was really true he forgot his promise to Diamond Head and the horses of the world yesterday. "Mom! Dad! Come quick!" Frightened that Willy was in danger when they heard his piercing shrieks, they rushed into the stables.

"It's Diamond Head! He can talk! He *really* can! All horses can! He told me! I heard him! And he s . . . "

"Now wait a minute, Willy, dear. You know better than that. Everyone knows that horses can't talk, dear."

"No, really, Mom, honest. We talked all day yesterday, and . . . Well, here, listen. Good morning, Diamond Head. Tell Mom and Dad what you told me yesterday! They won't tell anyone!!"

All eyes gazed upon Diamond Head, but he didn't even so much as lift his head at all this commotion. He just kept munching on some hay.



Two

Into the green vacuum of my being
you pour (lonely saxaphone carving
questions in the cigarette blued night) a
bittersweet taste of wine,
your eyes silently asking the ludicrous why:
Why I do not reach across the void
And clasp your searching fingers
(Listen, the bass is pulsating a
love affair with the crowded night).
The glass is empty,
(A high, half-finished soliloquy of sound)
The question dies.

FRANCES FISHER

On Parade

BOBBIE LONGO

Six stripes scamper, scoot,

skip across the street.

Run!! They're on parade . . .

six skunks!

Clerihew

BARBARA BOOTH

Norman Vincent Peale

Bursting with religious zeal

Said we can make God do what he ought

By using the power of positive thought.

People

People

never complete

their logic. If the moon

is cheese, green or not, then the sun's

PIZZA.

DIANE DE ANDA

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